

America's fine community colleges to help them teach the skills our changing economy demands.

We're meeting these priorities within a responsible budget. Under my plan, overall discretionary spending will grow at less than 4 percent. And non-security-related spending would rise less than 1 percent, the smallest such proposed increase in 12 years. By exercising spending discipline in Washington, DC, we will reduce the deficit and meet our most basic priorities.

To assure that Congress observes spending discipline, now and in the future, I propose making spending limits the law. This simple step would mean that every additional dollar the Congress wants to spend in excess of spending limits must be matched by a dollar in spending cuts elsewhere. Budget limits must mean something and not just serve as vague guidelines to be routinely violated. This single change in the procedures of the Congress would bring further spending restraint to Washington.

Americans expect Government to meet its most basic responsibilities, protecting citizens from harm and promoting prosperity and compassion at home. Americans also expect our Government to live within spending limits. My 2005 budget is designed to meet both of these goals, using tax dollars wisely and by focusing resources where they are most needed.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:13 a.m. on January 30 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 31. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 30 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks to the 2004 Congress of Tomorrow Luncheon in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
January 31, 2004

Thanks for coming. I thought I would give the State of the Union again. *[Laughter]* Actually, I'll spare you. I do want to thank the leadership for the House and the Senate, first

and foremost, for being such good friends and great Americans. Speaker Denny Hastert is doing a fabulous job on behalf of the American people, and I want to thank Majority Leader Bill Frist for doing a fabulous job as well. I appreciate your leadership. The country is better off by having these two good souls leading the Congress.

I want to thank McConnell, Santorum, and Kyl, DeLay, Blunt, and Deborah Pryce as well for sitting up here with me and for your leadership. I appreciate it very much. I'm proud to work with you. I want to thank my friend Dennis Miller, who is here. I'm honored that he is here. He's a solid American who—*[applause]*. And of course, like you, I was most impressed by the vocalist this morning, Tim Kelly. Thank you, Tim.

I know that a member of my Cabinet is here. Is that an accurate statement? Where's Elaine? Elaine, thanks. You're doing a great job. I appreciate so much your service. Your service is great. Your choice of husbands is somewhat questionable. *[Laughter]* That's not right—I mean, what the heck. *[Laughter]* I really appreciate what you've done.

I want the people—as you travel around the country, please remind people that one of the jobs of the President is to find really good folks to serve our Government, people from all walks of life, honorable, decent people who have put country ahead of self-interest. And I have done just that. And Elaine is an example of the really quality people that are serving our country in my Cabinet, and I want to thank you for being here.

And finally, I want to thank Jerry Clymer for hosting this event and making sure it runs well.

I think one of the things I was thinking about what to tell you here, when I was flying in from Washington, was that we're serving in historic times. And first I want to thank you for your service during these historic times. It's not easy to serve in the Congress or the Senate. It's a tough life when you come and you work hard and you represent your constituencies, and then you fly home. I see Thomas of California or Heather of New Mexico, some people who are traveling a long way to serve the country. And so the first thing I want to tell you is, I'm proud

of your service and appreciate your willingness to serve our country.

And I also want to thank your spouses as well; I want to thank your family members. When you swear in, you never know what's going to happen, and you better be ready to respond. And this Congress, in working with this administration, can say, "We have responded to the challenges of our time. We have met the tests."

As we look back on the last 3 years, we've gone to war to uphold the most solemn duty of Government, and that is to protect its people. We have dealt with national emergency. We not only responded to the emergency; we all worked together to help heal the psyche of the country that had been damaged.

We dealt with recession. The economy was negative in growth for the first three quarters of 2001, yet we responded. Instead of trying—sitting around committee rooms or White House conference tables trying to figure out what to do, we figured it out. And we acted quickly, and we responded. Instead of the economy still languishing as a result of some incredible problems we face, it's now growing, and it's getting stronger.

We had some people that didn't tell the truth in America, these corporate CEOs that forgot what it meant to be a responsible citizen, and we responded. The Congress and the White House worked together to pass meaningful legislation that sends clear signals to our fellow citizens: Regardless of their party or where they live, we expect people who are running corporations in America to tell the truth. We responded.

What I'm telling you is, history has dealt us a hand, and we're playing it well for the American people. And I want to thank you for that, very much.

These are historic times, because we're at war. You're a war Congress. And this upcoming year we will continue to make sure our troops have what it takes to fight and win the war against terror—and not only make sure we fight and win the war against terror but to make sure we continue to promote our values of freedom and, therefore, peace in parts of the world where people long for freedom and peace, where people are desperate for freedom.

See, what we believe is that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each person who lives in this world. And America—no question, we will win the war on terror by staying on the offensive. This administration and this leadership is committed to making sure that we stay on the offensive against the terrorists. And we will be.

But as well, we've got to make sure we continue to protect the homeland. And I want to thank the Members of Congress for working to implement a plan that is now being executed to better protect the homeland, to take lessons learned and to look at flawed systems and coordinate better, so we can tell the American people as best as we possibly can, "We're working together to make sure the homeland is secure." I want to thank you for your understanding of that solemn obligation and for your willing to work to make sure the homeland security programs are funded and implemented.

At home, we've got to make sure that the economy keeps growing. And one of the things we've shown the American people is we understand how the economy works. The economy doesn't work by growing Government. The economy works by growing people's wallets so they can spend, save, or invest. The tax cuts we passed are working. I look forward to taking the case to the American people and explain as clearly as I possibly can: This Congress heard the needs of the people looking for jobs; it responded; the tax cuts are working; and now we need to make them permanent.

There's a lot on—there's a lot involved with making sure the economy continues to grow, and that's cost containment of health care, controlling the costs of health care to citizens and small businesses and large businesses. And we've got to continue to make sure we're a trading nation and open up markets for our entrepreneurs—less regulation. There's a lot of things we can do together to keep the economy growing. But one clear signal we need to send to the American people and the markets is, we're going to be wise when it comes to the expenditure of the people's money.

And we submitted a budget that says just that, and we look forward to working with

you on it. You spend. I propose. Together, we're responsible. And this is going to be a challenging year for making sure we spend the people's money wisely, and I sent up an initiative to do just that. It cuts the deficit—the plan cuts the deficit in half over the next 5 years. And we look forward to working with you to make sure we meet that important goal, so that we can say to the American people, "We've set priorities. We understand whose money we spend, and we're going to cut this deficit in half through wise policy."

And finally at home, it's important for us to kind of play to the strength of the country, to remember the true strength of America. It's not our military—and by the way, we'll keep the military strong—and it's not the size of our wallets, although we want to make sure our wallets all across the country are healthy. The strength of the country is the hearts and souls of the American people. That's where we find our true strength. See, we understand the proper relationship between Government and the people. It's the people's Government we represent.

And as well, we shouldn't be afraid to empower those organizations that are serving our fellow citizens in an incredibly important and efficient way. They're serving because of love, first and foremost. They're following their hearts to mentor a child or to feed the hungry or to help the addicted. Congress understands—I know the leadership does, and I know you do as well—the true strength of America is the American people. We must listen to them. We will trust their judgments, and we must empower them to love their neighbors just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

Oh, '04 is going to be an unusual year for us all. It's an election year, and the people are probably saying, "Well, they're going to play politics with our time." That's not my attitude, and I know it's not the leadership's attitude. Working together, like we have done over 3 years, working together to accomplish important things for the people, we can show the cynics and the critics that we're capable of doing the people's business, election year or not.

And I look forward to working with you. I appreciate your friendship. I'm proud to be serving with such a fine group of people

during historic times. And there's no doubt in my mind, we're making a significant difference for this country's security, prosperity, and freedom.

God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. at the Loews Philadelphia Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Senators Mitch McConnell, Rick Santorum, and Jon Kyl; Representatives Tom DeLay, Bill Blunt, Deborah Pryce, William M. Thomas, and Heather Wilson; comedian Dennis Miller; and 10-year-old Timmy Kelly, who sang the national anthem.

Statement on Representative Jennifer Dunn's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

January 31, 2004

Jennifer Dunn is a good friend and an outstanding public servant. For more than a decade, she has delivered results for the people of Washington State. She has championed sound policies that encourage economic growth and create jobs. She has led the way in providing tax relief for the American people; promoting the advancement of small and women-owned businesses; helping America's children, including by sponsoring the Amber Alert bill; and protecting the environment. She is a superb legislator and a strong leader who has stood for the best of Washington State's values and who has improved the lives of its people.

Laura and I are grateful for Jennifer's friendship, and we extend our best wishes to her, her husband, Keith, and her two sons.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters

February 2, 2004

The President. I want to thank the members of my Cabinet for their service to our country. I'm proud of the team I've put together to serve our citizens. These are good, honorable people who have come to Washington, DC, to put the Nation's interests above their self-interest.